

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
House Minority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader Boehner:

As members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), jointly known as the TriCaucus, we are writing to express our deep disappointment with the House-Senate negotiated SCHIP bill because it fails to include Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act (ICHIA). We respectfully request that you commit to bringing ICHIA and other important health disparities legislation to the floor during the 110th Congress.

As you know, ICHIA was included in the House-passed CHAMP Act and is one of the TriCaucus' top legislative priorities. It has bipartisan support and has been endorsed by more than 500 organizations nationwide, including many religious and health care providers. Its enactment is critical to addressing the growing health disparities in communities of color.

Despite the dramatic achievements in health and healthcare over the past century, the health of racial and ethnic minority Americans continues to lag behind that of other Americans. Not since 2000 has Congress taken significant steps to reduce recognized health disparities for minority communities. Reauthorization of SCHIP was an important opportunity to begin to address these disparities, particularly through enactment of ICHIA.

As you know, ICHIA would allow states the option to provide Medicaid and SCHIP coverage to all eligible, legally present, children and pregnant women. More than 20 states, including California, Nebraska, and Texas, already use their own funds to provide health care to at least some legally present immigrants who are ineligible for Medicaid or SCHIP because of the five year bar. ICHIA can both reduce disparities in health care and save money by reducing unnecessary hospitalizations by 22 percent.

The world-renowned Institute of Medicine, myriad think tanks, and health policy experts recognize the consequences that disparities in care have on long-term health outcomes. That is why they strongly support H.R. 3014, the *Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2007*, comprehensive legislation introduced to address the underlying causes of health disparities in communities of color. This bill is supported by nearly 100 organizations and nearly as many members of Congress, including all members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional

Hispanic Caucus and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. Consideration of this legislation would demonstrate a commitment to reducing racial and ethnic health disparities.

To continue to deny health coverage to legally present children and pregnant women and to fail to address other disparities in health care for racial and ethnic minorities is both unwise and unnecessary. We ask that you commit to bringing ICHIA and the Health Equity and Accountability Act to the floor during the 110th Congress to address these important issues to all communities of color.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Hilda L. Solis
Chair, Congressional Hispanic
Caucus Task Force on Health
and the Environment



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Chair, Congressional Asian
Pacific American Caucus
Health Task Force

Donna M. Christensen
Chair, Congressional Black
Caucus Health Braintrust



Joe Baca
Chair, Congressional Hispanic
Caucus



Mike Honda
Chair, Congressional Asian
Pacific American Caucus

Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick
Chair, Congressional Black
Caucus